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FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION

In the matter of : Grover Norquist
Americans for Tax Reform
Ken Mehlman
Bush-Cheney '04

MUR No.: 5409

COMPLAINT

1. Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington hereby brings this complaint before the Federal Election Commission seeking an immediate FEC investigation and enforcement action against Grover Norquist, Americans for Tax Reform, Ken Mehlman and Bush-Cheney '04 for direct and serious violations of federal campaign finance law.

Complainant

2. Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington is a non-profit, non-partisan organization dedicated to ensuring accountability in public officials.

Respondents

3. Grover Norquist is the President of Americans for Tax Reform. He has been actively involved in creating a conservative grass roots movement and he is the creator of the "K Street Project," which records and disseminates the party membership of and Republican donations made by lobbyists, trade associations, and corporations doing business before Congress. On information and belief, Mr. Norquist is often referred to as the head of the right-wing conspiracy.

4. Americans for Tax Reform, Inc., a 501 (c)(4) organization and a non-profit corporation in the District of Columbia , advocates a system in which the government's power to tax would be minimized and works to defeat legislation increasing taxes. In addition, Mr. Norquist, holds weekly meetings in the offices of Americans for Tax Reform including Congressman, lobbyists, senior White House and Hill staffers, industry group leaders and right-wing policy makers. The purpose of these meetings is to advance the conservative agenda.

5. Ken Mehlman is the Campaign Manager of Bush-Cheney '04. Before moving to the campaign, Mr. Mehlman worked in the Executive Office of the President as Deputy Assistant to the President and Director of Political Affairs. Prior to his work in the White House, Mr. Mehlman served as the National Field Director of Bush-Cheney '00.

6. Bush-Cheney '04 is the principal campaign committee for the effort to re-elect Mr. Bush and Mr. Cheney to their respective offices of President of the United States and Vice-President of the United States. The committee is registered with the FEC.

Factual Allegations

7. On January 12, 2004, *The Washington Post* reported that Mr. Norquist met with Mr. Mehlman in a bar and restaurant close to the Bush-Cheney campaign headquarters in order to give Mr. Mehlman, acting on behalf of Bush-Cheney '04, a "master contact list" of conservative activists. "Sowing the Seeds of GOP Domination; Conservative Norquist Cultivates Grass Roots Beyond the Beltway," *The Washington Post*, January 12, 2004, A01 (attached as Exhibit A).

8. According to the article, the master contact list was Mr. Norquist's gift to the presidential race and included information regarding conservative leaders from across the country, hand-picked by Mr. Norquist, who would help organize the conservative base to support the Bush-Cheney campaign. *Id.*

9. On January 16, 2003 *Forbes* reported that the master contact list includes conservative activists in 37 states. "Election Trap," *Forbes.com*, January 16, 2004 (attached as Exhibit B). Also, according to *Forbes*, "Norquist has spent five years recruiting and training these activists, who coordinate weekly meetings attended by hundreds of grass-roots supporters." On information and belief, the master contact list was compiled by Mr. Norquist using considerable corporate resources provided by Americans for Tax Reform.

10. Federal campaign law defines "contribution" to include "any gift . . . or anything of value . . ." 2 U.S.C. §431(8)(A)(i). FEC regulations further define "contribution":

For purposes of this section, the term anything of value includes all in-kind contributions. Unless specifically exempted under 11 CFR part 100, subpart C, the provision of any goods or services without charge or at a charge which is less than the usual and normal charge for such goods or services is a contribution. Examples of such goods or services include, but are not limited to . . . membership lists and mailing lists.

11 CFR 100.52(d)(1).

11. FEC regulations also state that "[f]or the purposes of paragraph (d)(1) of this section, usual and normal charge for goods means the price of those goods in the market from which they ordinarily would have been purchased at the time of the contribution. . . ." 11 CFR 100.52(d)(2). On information and belief, the master contact list created by Mr. Norquist constituted an in-kind contribution with a substantial market value made to Bush-Cheney '04.

12. On information and belief, neither Mr. Norquist, Americans for Tax Reform nor Bush-Cheney '04 reported the contribution of this list to the FEC. Federal law requires candidates and their authorized committees in a federal election to report to the FEC, according to a defined schedule, all contributions made to candidates and their authorized committees in a federal election. 2 U.S.C. § 434(a)-(b).

COUNT I

13. By giving the master contact list to Ken Mehlman for use by Bush-Cheney '04, Mr. Norquist, acting on behalf of Americans for Tax Reform, violated the prohibition on corporate contributions to federal candidates. 2 U.S.C. § 441b(a). Similarly, Bush-Cheney '04 violated this prohibition by accepting the in-kind corporate contribution of the list.

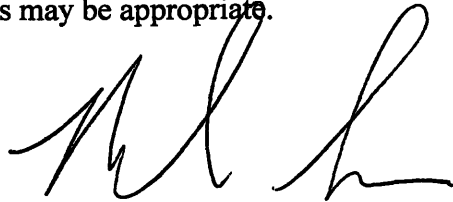
COUNT II

14. If the master list providing information on conservative activists in 37 states constitutes a personal contribution by Mr. Norquist rather than a corporate contribution by Americans for Tax Reform, on information and belief, the value of that list exceeds the \$2000 personal contribution limit. As a result, Mr. Mehlman's receipt of this list on behalf of Bush-Cheney '04 constitutes a violation of the federal law prohibiting campaigns from accepting excessive contributions. 2 U.S.C. §441(a)(1)(A).

COUNT III

15. Mr. Norquist and Americans for Tax Reform, and Bush-Cheney '04 violated federal law 2 U.S.C. § 434 (a)-(b), by failing to report to the FEC the master contact list as a contribution made and received, respectively, in a federal election.

WHEREFORE, Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington requests that the Federal Election Commission conduct an investigation into these allegations, declare the respondents to have violated the federal campaign finance laws, impose sanctions appropriate to these violations and take such further action as may be appropriate.

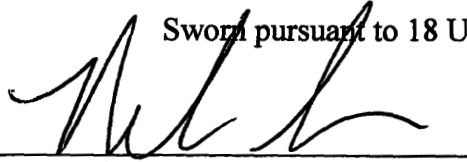


Melanie Sloan, Executive Director
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Verification

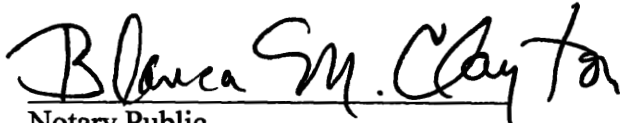
Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, acting through Melanie Sloan, hereby verifies that the statements made in the attached Complaint are, upon information and belief, true.

Sworn pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 1001.



Melanie Sloan

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 4th day of February, 2004.



Notary Public

Blanca M. Clayton
Notary Public, District of Columbia
My Commission Expires 04-30-2007

EXHIBIT A

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The Washington Post
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Monday, January 12, 2004

A Section

Sowing the Seeds of GOP Domination; Conservative Norquist Cultivates Grass
Roots Beyond the Beltway

Laura Blumenfeld
Washington Post Staff Writer

In a noisy corner of Harry's Tap Room, two men huddled over a map of the United States. They spoke in quiet voices: "Tennessee will be run by Steve."

"West Virginia -- we have three people."

"North Dakota is tough. You talked to Michigan?"

Diners brushed past the men unaware, as Ken Mehlman and **Grover Norquist** hopscotched across state lines, refining what Norquist calls, with a wink, "our secret plan to seize power." Mehlman, the Bush-Cheney campaign manager, and Norquist, gardener of the conservative grass roots, were discussing a new tactic for the 2004 election: The campaign would activate the conservative base as it never had before.

Norquist, 47, is known for his weekly strategy sessions of conservatives, a Washington institution. But quietly, for the past five years, he also has been building a network of "mini-Grover" franchises. He has crisscrossed the country, hand-picking leaders, organizing meetings of right-wing advocates in 37 states. The network will meet its first test in the presidential race. On this evening at Harry's, several blocks from campaign headquarters in Arlington, Norquist presented his master contact list to Mehlman, mapped out and bound in a book.

"Fabulous, Grover. Awesome," Mehlman said, scanning the book like a hungry man reading a menu. "We're going to take that energy and harness it."

The binder was Norquist's gift to the presidential race. His aspirations, though, extend far beyond the White House. Congress, governorships, state legislatures, the media, the courts -- Norquist has a programming plan, and it is all Republican, all the time. Norquist closes his letters, "Onward." He takes the mission so seriously, he has named a successor in his will. Socially, he is often introduced as the head of the vast right-wing conspiracy. He

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accepts the title with a faint blush.

"He is an impresario of the center-right," the president's strategist, Karl Rove, said in an interview. Rove said Norquist's activists helped President Bush push trade promotion, tax cuts, judicial nominees and tort reform, among other items. "They've been out there slogging for us in the trenches."

They gather every Wednesday morning in a boardroom of Americans for Tax Reform. Norquist is president of the anti-tax group. The shades are down, the lights are weak, yet an incandescent assuredness infuses the room. A hundred and twenty people mill around, eating bagels, distributing talking points, exchanging business cards and tips. They are lobbyists, analysts, senior White House and Hill staffers, advocates for property rights, gun ownership and traditional values. There are never enough chairs. The air is as warm as a hatchery.

"Guys, could you all please be seated," Norquist said on a recent Wednesday. " 'Cause as usual, we have a fun-filled, action-packed, spine-tingling agenda."

The sessions are by invitation only, and off the record. A Washington Post reporter was allowed access on the condition that no participant would be quoted without permission.

One week, Norquist called on Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist (R-Tenn.) to speak. "Thank you all," Frist said, rising. He smiled at men with American flags on their lapels, at women who have driven around tornadoes to attend meetings. He addressed them in a manner a man might use with his guard dog, mixing appreciation, condescension and a note of fear. Ever since the conservative base turned on George H.W. Bush and he was defeated for reelection in 1992, the Republican leadership has been wary of its bite.

"I understand that it takes all of you to get this far," Frist said. A member asked Frist about passing legislation with a 51-seat majority.

"I'm in the business of recruitment," Frist said, of the 2004 Senate elections. "I need to net up three folks."

In the meantime, Norquist offered to lobby senators on specific issues: "Let us know about votes. We'll see if we can get you three more good guys."

Bad Guys and Evildoers

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Political pressure is the intended outcome of every meeting. Although members represent disparate causes, Norquist said, "they play nicely together." He calls it the "leave us alone" coalition. Unlike groups on the left, which fight among themselves for government aid, he said, the right unites over its disdain for government.

Norquist sits in the middle of the table, ticking down a list of presenters. His features are pointy and directional, giving him a look of forward momentum. His eyebrows appear to be blown back by a headwind. In rapid succession, people take the microphone and make their appeal.

On the estate tax: "Let's team up," urged Richard Patten, executive director of the American Family Business Institute. "We can amplify our separate armies and kill the death tax."

On judicial nominees: "Blast-fax your media list," said Kerri Houston, vice president of policy at Frontiers of Freedom. "If this thing doesn't blow a hole through the Beltway, we're in big trouble."

After a presentation by Matt Schlapp, the White House director for political affairs, David Keene, chairman of the American Conservative Union, exclaimed, "This is an administration that cares not just about the president, but about all the other races. I've never seen such coordination."

Coordination, though, assumes cooperation. For those who do not cooperate, Norquist plays enforcer. Democrats are "bad guys," but errant Republicans are "evil." When the House voted to pass school vouchers in September, Norquist growled, "Who voted wrong on that?" A Hill staff member distributed the Republican blacklist. On the Internet access tax vote, he targeted two Republican senators from Tennessee and Ohio: "We're trying to get [Lamar] Alexander and [George] Voinovich to behave. Any advice appreciated."

When Alabama Gov. Bob Riley (R) tried to pass a state tax increase, Norquist helped defeat it. "We're going to keep him on life support," he said. "We'll put him in a freezer, as an example." He gave the Alabama state party chairman an award for opposing the hike. Instead of a plaque, Norquist sent him a sword with a steel blade. Even presidents have felt his wrath. Norquist first organized the Wednesday meetings in 1993 to galvanize opposition to Bill Clinton's health care plan. He keeps a rubber stamp by his desk, "Find Him and Kill Him." Near it, he has taped a yellowing scrap on which he had written: "Oct. 12, 1987. Bush: 'I won't raise your taxes, period.' " Norquist still condemns the first President Bush for breaking that promise.

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He criticized George W. Bush's policies as well, when Bush was governor of Texas. But since Bush has become president, Norquist has muted his disapproval. Paul Weyrich, another conservative leader, said the younger Bush has earned the base's respect: "I have worked with administrations going back to Nixon. These people are more responsive than any other White House."

Liberals offer less favorable interpretations of Norquist's support for the administration. "He's a crass hypocrite," said Leon Wieseltier, an editor at the New Republic. "He won't attack the president because it would be imprudent to be intellectually honest with the king. He's a Washington grotesque -- a man who has created a successful character in a tacky sitcom, and he doesn't want to hurt his ratings."

Norquist treats speakers from the White House deferentially. Although political candidates are put on the spot -- "What's your stand on guns and babies [abortion]?" -- Cabinet members and other senior officials are not. After introducing Daniel Sutherland, the Department of Homeland Security's officer of civil rights and civil liberties, Norquist cocked his head: "Explain to us, are we for this or against this?"

When Joshua B. Bolten, director of the Office of Management and Budget, came, Norquist asked, "For those of us on the outside, when someone sticks a mike in our face and says, 'Spending is up! You guys on the right are failing,' what are the talking points?"

Bolten rattled off the budget statistics that he could use.

Yet under Bush, the largest budget surplus in history has become the largest deficit in history. In the past, Norquist has said he wants to shrink government "down to the size where you could drown it in a bathtub." Now, glancing up at Bolten, Norquist ventured politely: "Is there a single agency you want to get rid of? It would be really helpful for us to say, 'This administration wants to get rid of . . . ' "

Norquist's conversion from ideological outsider to member of the establishment reflects a broader transformation in the movement. One Wednesday morning, former House speaker Newt Gingrich, Norquist's comrade in the Republican revolution of 1994, walked into the boardroom. He smiled at Norquist, his tongue resting on his lip, like a boy who was about to misbehave.

"Health," Gingrich began his pitch, "is one of the great opportunities for conservatism."

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Congress was voting on the Medicare bill that week. For the next 15 minutes, Gingrich tried to convince the audience that the proposal, the greatest entitlement expansion in a generation, was good for the conservative cause. The reception was mixed.

"Be positive. Let the other side be nasty," Gingrich said, a shade pinker than when he had entered the room. His message: If you want to hold on to power, you cannot be purists. "The best way to beat Hillary [Clinton] is to build our base. Shrink hers." He licked his bottom lip: "Then we can crush her."

While he spoke, three groups circulated petitions opposing the Medicare proposition. Others grumbled that Gingrich was taking this view because his new Center for Health Transformation was funded by health care companies.

Some conservatives have stopped attending the meetings because, they say, the institution has "gone Beltway." Now that Republicans are in power, the emphasis has shifted from ideology to lobbying for rich clients, they say. At one session, former representative Bob Livingston (R-La.) promoted a telecom client. At another, former Oklahoma governor Frank Keating (R) talked to the audience as president of the American Council of Life Insurers. One coalition dropout dismissed Norquist as a "homo economicus" -- driven by market forces rather than by social issues.

Tuna Fish and Hand Lotion

And yet Norquist's bachelor townhouse bears evidence of a man whose ideological core is hard. The art in his living room is early Ronald Reagan. His Costco-brand shirts hang in a closet under a picture of former Senate leader Robert J. Dole (R-Kan.) signing a no-tax pledge.

He is often described as an eccentric. For a bedside table, Norquist uses a giant green canister for Kraft parmesan cheese. He displays what he hopes will be the world's largest collection of airsickness bags. At staff meetings, employees say, he holds court while variously sitting on a giant red plastic ball, eating tuna from a can, rubbing his feet against a massager and sniffing hand lotion as he kneads it into his fingers. He excuses himself to go to "the ladies room."

His manner is charming, though bitterness creeps into his voice when he talks about classmates at Harvard, where he attended college ('78) and business school ('81). As a Republican, Norquist felt isolated among the students, whom he calls "Bolsheviks." At a reunion in the early 1990s, he said, he told a classmate: "For 40 years we fought a two-front war against the Soviet Union and state-ism. Now we can turn all our time and energy to crushing you. With the

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Soviet Union, it was just business. With you, it's personal."

He leaves the impression that perhaps some of the 18 hours a day he devotes to establishing a permanent Republican majority has to do with punishing college tormenters. As for being socially awkward, his mother had advised him when he was growing up in Weston, Mass., to "dance with the wallflowers." If you do, she said, you will be at the center of things.

That is how Norquist spends his days -- dancing with wallflowers. He cultivates state legislators, whom others overlook, working them like a farm team for Congress. He organizes events to bring nontraditional groups into the Republican tent: Indians, gays, single women. Some conservatives have attacked him for his outreach to Arab and Muslim Americans, charging that he has embraced radicals with ties to terrorism. Administration officials, including Rove, have said there is no truth to the allegations.

Other conservatives offered reasons of their own for avoiding him. One called his meeting "a freak show" that is "intellectually insulting." Another said he "represents a rare level of vitriol and suspicion." Many dismiss him as a media creation, a showman who is better at generating press than political results. None would speak for the record. His friends said this was proof that his detractors speak out of jealousy.

"He's the engine that empowers us all," said Gary Maloney, a Republican consultant and friend. "I call him up and say, 'What should I think?' "

Now he's focusing on the "mini-Grover" state coalition meetings and their role in the presidential campaign. In Maine, organizers bake cranberry muffins. In Hawaii, members fly in from all the islands. In Texas, participants are so boisterous they limit meetings to a single issue. A precursor of the group in New Mexico had to be shut down after it was taken over by conspiracy theorists who believed black helicopters from the United Nations were moving people around at night.

Norquist issued meeting guidelines, including: "No gossiping. No whining. No rambling discourses or philosophical discussions. We know we are hard core." Whether they are religious activists, home-schoolers or business advocates, participants find a place where they can joke about being "extremists" and "rabid right-wingers." Greg Blankenship, leader of the Illinois group, said it was a relief in his liberal state to assemble with like-minded conservatives: "I guess you could say I live in enemy-occupied territory."

The gatherings in one New England state are so effective, they place stories in the local media four or five times a week. "No one knows it's the coalition

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doing it because there is no publicity of the meetings," the leader wrote in an internal memo. "I don't know how much longer we can operate below the radar."

During a monthly conference call with the state meeting leaders, Norquist asked the Vermont representative for dirt on the former governor, Howard Dean, the front-runner for the Democratic presidential nomination. "It would be extremely helpful for you to get the information out," Norquist said. "So people around the country have talking points on Dean."

Democrats used to anger him, Norquist said. He's past angry now. "Do you get mad at cancer? We'll defeat and crush their institutions, and the trial lawyers will go sell pizza. We're not going to hang them. Most of the people on the left will be happy in Grover's world. I feel about the left the way [Donald H.] Rumsfeld felt about the Iraqis."

And after Norquist purges the United States, there is the rest of the world. He says this with the confidence of a man who uses a black laundry marker as a pen. He has helped start Wednesday meetings in Canada, New Zealand, England and Japan. He has learned to be patient: "I now understand you can't just explain to the idiots how to do it and to see it your way, because they're too foolish to see it."

Norquist knows he will survive politically, as sure as he outlived Reagan and Gingrich. He will always be relevant, he said, because he embodies the issue that unifies Republicans: lower taxes.

The plan -- The Plan -- in all its detail turns round in his head when he climbs into bed at midnight. "You're Bush and you're trying to get reelected," Norquist said he was thinking. "What should you do?" A framed copy of Bush's '02 State of the Union address hangs across from his bed. A Bush-Cheney '04 contribution envelope lies next to him, along with a black machete from Malawi.

As he goes to sleep, he rehearses lines for speeches and opinion columns. Lately, he has been working on an article about the presidential race: "A cornered rat fights. The left is playing for its life, and will fight harder than anyone on the right sees. . . ." The words keep marching -- onward -- until he loses consciousness.

----- INDEX REFERENCES -----

NEWS SUBJECT: (Domestic Politics (GPOL); Elections (GVOTE); Upper House (GVUPH); Political/General News (GCAT); Page-One Story (NPAG); Government Bodies (GVBOD); Legislative Branch

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Election Trap

Matthew Swibel, 01 16 04, 6 43 PM ET

Know a candidate you favor and like to have him drop by the office for coffee and a chat? Watch out. When law firm Baker Botts hosted a breakfast for a federal candidate in its Houston offices last year, it billed him even for the coffee beans. Cheap lawyers? Nope. Baker Botts wanted to make sure it didn't violate the prohibition on corporate contributions.

Washington lawyer **Jan Baran**, a former general counsel for the Republican National Committee, says he's instructed more than a dozen chief executives in this election cycle not to pay for envelopes or stamps or physically handle donation checks.

How tricky are the election laws? Well, even a pro like Attorney General **John Ashcroft** tripped up. In December, the Federal Election Commission fined Ashcroft's 2000 Senate campaign and his political action committee a combined \$37,000 because the PAC gave the committee a 100,000-name fundraising mailing list. Federal law prohibits PACs from making contributions to federal candidates that exceed \$10,000 in an election cycle, and the FEC ruled the use of the list (which cost \$1.7 million to build) was worth \$112,000.

Then there's conservative activist **Grover Norquist**, director of Americans for Tax Reform and normally a savvy player. His former lobbying clients and corporate donors include **Fannie Mae** (nyse FNM - news - people), **Microsoft** (nasdaq MSFT - news - people) and newly renamed **Time Warner** (nyse TWX - news - people). Other backers reportedly include **Philip Morris**, now known as **Altria** (nyse MO - news - people), and other tobacco firms, **Seagram** and other liquor interests, and **Pfizer** (nyse PFE - news - people). Norquist recently allowed a *Washington Post* reporter to witness (for a front page profile) his presentation of a gift to Bush-Cheney campaign manager **Ken Mehlman**—a bound "master contact list" of conservative activists in 37 states.

Norquist has spent five years recruiting and training these activists, who coordinate weekly meetings attended by hundreds of grass-roots supporters. These are state versions of Norquist's Washington

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meetings, attended by senior White House staffers, gun lobbyists, proliferators and conservative think tanks

"A campaign would love to get a list of these [coordinators'] names," says a conservative who's familiar with the Washington powwows. "It saves them time. The Bush campaign has a database with 6 million names, but how many can they really activate?"

A verboten contribution of a list? Clean government groups are licking their lips. "How much money and staff time over five years did it take to put together this list?" asks **Lawrence Noble**, director of the Center for Responsive Politics. Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics is already planning on calling for an FEC inquiry. "The list has no financial value," Norquist insists.

Oh, yeah? Stay tuned.



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